

THE NATION'S DEFENSE FORCES

LESSON 1: THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE



*operational commands
specified
strategic
tactical
theater unified commands*



MISSIONS

The mission of the Department of Defense is to *provide the military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of the United States*. Inherent in this mission is the responsibility for planning military strategy, maintaining the armed forces, operating the military bases throughout the world, and defending the country from foreign threats. The Department of Defense assigns these duties to the Military Departments.

INTRODUCTION

The executive department responsible for the nation's defense forces is the Department of Defense. It was created in 1947, when Congress combined the former Navy and War departments into a National Military Establishment, an executive department headed by a secretary of defense.

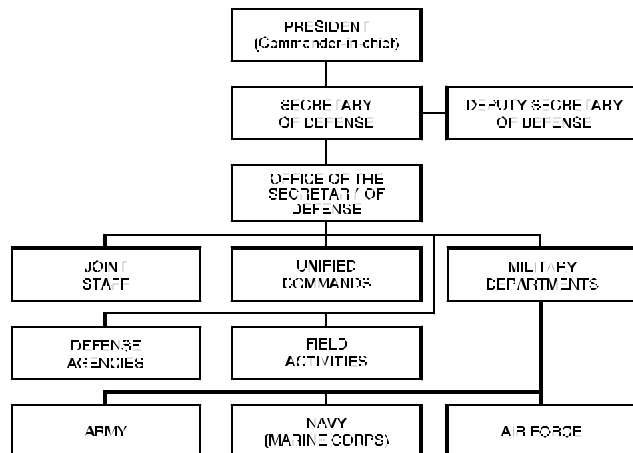
BACKGROUND

In 1789, Congress created the Department of War to administer and conduct military affairs. Then, in 1798, Congress separated the naval forces from the land forces, creating the Department of the Navy. The Departments of War and Navy remained for almost 150 years as the only two military departments. However, the *National Security Act* of 1947 created the Department of the Air Force and replaced the Department of War with the Department of the Army. This act also created the National Military Establishment to oversee the three Military Departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force — the Marine Corps was included under the Navy). In 1949, Congress renamed the National Military Establishment the Department of Defense.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

ORGANIZATION

The Department of Defense is the organization through which the President exercises civilian control over the military. The Secretary of Defense, a civilian appointed by the President but subject to Senate approval, is the principal defense policy adviser to the President. Although the President has final authority and responsibility on all defense matters, the Secretary of Defense is responsible for formulating general defense policy, executing approved policy, and exercising authority, direction, and control over the DoD. The major elements of DoD are shown below.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Secretary of Defense is sixth in the order of presidential succession, following the Vice President (VP), Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore of the Senate (presiding officer of the Senate in the absence of the VP), Secretary of State, and Secretary of the Treasury. Beginning with the Secretary of State, succession is determined by the order in which the departments of the President's Cabinet were created.

The Annual Report to the President and Congress is the premier document issued by the Secretary of Defense. In addition to fulfilling a statutory requirement, it serves as an important reference document for many people interested in national defense issues and programs.

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The Deputy Secretary of Defense is delegated full authority to act for the Secretary of Defense and to exercise the powers of the Secretary on any and all matters for which the Secretary is authorized to act pursuant to law.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

This office is the principal staff element of the Secretary of Defense in the exercise of policy development, planning, resource management, fiscal, and program evaluation responsibilities. The Office of the Secretary of Defense includes the following Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and other elements:

➤ *Under Secretaries for:*

- ✓ *Acquisition and Technology* — responsible for programs such as nuclear, chemical, and biological defense; acquisition reform; advanced technology; environmental security; logistics; space; and ballistic missile defense organization
- ✓ *Comptroller* — responsible for programs in areas such as contract audit, program analysis and evaluation, and national performance review activities
- ✓ *Personnel and Readiness* — responsible for programs such as force management, program integration, and health and reserve affairs
- ✓ *Policy* — responsible for programs such as international security affairs, special operations and low-intensity conflict, and strategy and threat reduction

➤ *Assistant Secretaries for:*

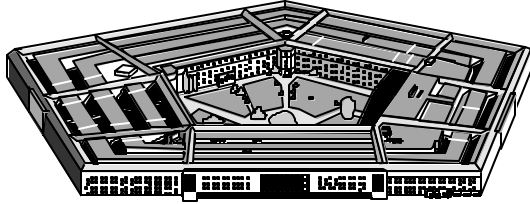
- ✓ Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence
- ✓ Legislative and Public Affairs

➤ *Other elements include:*

- ✓ General Counsel
- ✓ Inspector General
- ✓ Director of Operational Test and Evaluation

The central headquarters for the Department of Defense is at the world's largest

office building, the Pentagon — located in Washington, DC.



JOINT STAFF

Organization

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) constitute the immediate military staff of the Secretary of Defense and consist of the following general officers (4-star rank) from the Armed Forces:

- ❑ Chairman (appointed by the President but subject to Senate approval)
- ❑ Vice Chairman
- ❑ Chief of Staff of the Army
- ❑ Chief of Naval Operations
- ❑ Chief of Staff of the Air Force
- ❑ Commandant of the Marine Corps

The collective body of the JCS is headed by the Chairman, who sets the agenda and presides over JCS meetings. Additionally, the Chairman is the principal adviser to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council.

However, all JCS members are by law military advisers and they may respond to a request or voluntarily submit, through the Chairman, advice or opinions to the President, Secretary of Defense, or the National Security Council. Although responsibilities as members of the JCS take precedence over the duties as the Chiefs of the Military Services, these personnel are the senior military officers of their respective

Services. As such, they are also responsible for keeping the Secretaries of the Military Departments fully informed on matters considered or acted upon by the JCS.

Mission

The main responsibilities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in conjunction with the Military Departments, include:

- ✓ The **strategic** and **tactical** direction of the combatant forces
- ✓ The operation of the combatant forces under **unified commands**
- ✓ The integration of combatant forces into an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces
- ✓ Research and development

Executive Authority

During World War II, the Joint Chiefs of Staff acted as executive agents in dealing with **theater** and area commanders, but the original *National Security Act* of 1947 saw the Joint Chiefs as planners and advisers, not as commanders of combatant commands. In spite of this, the 1948 *Key West Agreement* allowed members of the Joint Chiefs to serve as executive agents for unified commands, a responsibility that allowed them to originate direct communication with the combatant command.

However, Congress abolished this authority in a 1953 amendment to the *National Security Act*. Today, the Joint Chiefs have no executive authority to command combatant forces. The issue of executive authority was clearly resolved by the *Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act* of 1986: “The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall assign all forces under their jurisdiction to unified and **specified**

combatant **commands** to perform missions assigned to those commands ...;" the chain of command "runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense; and from the Secretary of Defense to the commander of the combatant command." The world is divided into nine geographical areas, each with a Commander-in-Chief (CINC) assigned. To facilitate mission accomplishment, these commanders have full **operational** command and control over all forces assigned to them.

MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

The Military Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force are each headed by a Secretary who does not have cabinet rank and is a civilian. These Departments are responsible for maintaining the readiness of their assigned forces to ensure the security of the U.S. and to support the nation's policies and interests. The basic objectives of the Military Departments and the U.S. Armed Forces are to:

- Prevent military actions that threaten the safety of the United States or its allies.
- Defend the United States' territories, waters, and airspace.
- Engage in all necessary military operations and other assigned duties.
- End hostilities on terms favorable to the United States.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Department of Defense maintains the academies for each of these Departments. Can you name these academies?

CONCLUSION

This lesson introduced you to the organization, background, and missions of the Department of Defense (DoD). You saw a specific example of the constitutional requirement for civilian control of the military with the President, Secretary of Defense, and the Secretaries of the Military Departments all being civilians. The highest military officers in the DoD are the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The missions and responsibilities of this Department make it a vital part of the federal government and critical to the nation's defense.